

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PROCESS IS IN FINAL STAGES TO FILL UPCOMING VACANCY IN
THE NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas L. Kilbride says the process to appoint an interim replacement for the December 31 retirement of Circuit Court Judge Larry Heiser is in its final stages.

Under the Illinois Constitution, the Illinois Supreme Court is vested with the authority to fill judicial vacancies.

Justice Kilbride also released the names of the judicial screening committee which is made up of four non-lawyer community representatives and six lawyers and judges from the legal community.

The non-lawyer community representatives are: Virginia Campbell, service person at Carhartt, Inc., Galesburg; Mary Michalek, CEO of the Galesburg Clinic; Sandy Monari, former chairman and current member of the Fulton County Board, and former business owner and operator of Monari's Tasty Freeze, Farmington; and Don Rosenberry a plumber from Galesburg.

Members of the legal community include Chief Judge Steven C. Mathers of the Ninth Judicial Circuit; Monmouth attorney Jane Hartley Pratt; Galesburg attorney John W. Robertson with Stoerzbach, Morrison P.C.; and Lewiston attorney Joan C. Scott, partner with Ewing & Scott.

The co-chairpersons of the committee are Tobias G. Barry, retired justice from the Illinois Appellate Court in the Third Judicial District, and Timothy Bertschy, a Peoria attorney, who is a past president of the Illinois State Bar Association.

Justice Kilbride uses an extensive application, evaluation and interview process to make recommendations for judicial vacancies in the Third Judicial District. Justice Barry and Mr. Bertschy served on previous screening committees appointed by Justice Kilbride and provide procedural continuity to the screening process, which is dominated by input from the local community.

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The appointment process used by Justice Kilbride also consists of a written survey of registered attorneys in the Ninth Judicial Circuit, which is conducted by the Illinois State Bar Association; background checks by police authorities and with the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission.

Among qualities an applicant must possess include a demonstrated reputation for integrity and good character; a demonstrated commitment to equal justice under law; outstanding legal ability and competence; and the appropriate demeanor, character and personality necessary for the judicial temperament required by a Circuit Court judge.

The person appointed to fill the vacancy will serve until the first Monday in December 2008, when the position will be filled by the election in November 2008.

Those who applied and who are under review for consideration are attorneys Paul Mangieri, Tracey Mergener and Steven Watts.

The 9th Judicial Circuit includes Knox, Warren, Henderson, Hancock, McDonough and Fulton counties.

The Third Judicial District is composed of 21 counties across the north central part of the state, stretching from Will, Kankakee and Iroquois counties in the east to Whiteside, Rock Island, Peoria, Mercer, Henderson and Hancock in the west.

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